

## Greener pastures for Abbotsford's four-legged friends

By Jean Konda-Witte, Abbotsford Times July 15, 2011 | Photograph by: Jean Konda-Witte, Times



Volunteers Joy Smith, left, and Meaghan Delaney, 17, give some treats to Thunder, left and Storm at the Circle F Horse Rescue Society in Abbotsford recently.

They have seven years between them, but for the most part they're pretty good buddies. They had to be. The two spent a good part of their life cooped up together in a small pen, sometimes knee deep in mud and muck. Access to food was also an issue and it wasn't long until the equine friends, Thunder and Storm, were losing their zest for life. But that all changed for the better just two months ago when an SPCA cruelty seizure landed the emaciated pair in greener pastures, literally, at the Circle F Horse Rescue Society in Abbotsford.

"You would have cried when you saw them come in," said Joy Smith, a board member with the society who's been volunteering with horses for years. "You could see their bones, their ribs were sticking out." Storm and Thunder were in very bad shape when they were rescued. "I get goose bumps even talking about it," said Smith. "It's heartbreaking when you see them."

But with the tender loving care of a stable full of volunteers, Storm, a 12-year-old Thoroughbred mare, and Thunder, a five-year-old Standardbred gelding, have thrived at the horse rescue society, where they received proper nutrition to bring them back to health, human attention, grooming, exercise and a pasture to graze.

"You wouldn't recognize them now," said Smith, after just two months. "Seeing them now makes it worth volunteering."

Smith, who lives in Chilliwack, is admittedly a horse lover, and has been involved in the society for just over five years. "It's like getting your horse fix without the expense of having your own horse," she said. "That's

why I'm here. They're my passion - they make my world."

Circle F was founded in 1997 by Sherri Borneman, who felt that all horses should have freedom from neglect and abuse and freedom to have a good home - hence the name Circle F. There are 45 to 50 dedicated volunteers from students to retired to veterinarians, who put in time for the good of the horses.

Many are busy throughout the year, raising funds to keep the non-profit society going. Some horses have costly medical needs and there are also sizable feed bills, along with payments on the rental property.

Last fall Circle F held a very successful Poker Ride, which brought in \$3,300 for the rescue. The fun-filled afternoon attracted riders from throughout the province, who picked up their poker hand at various stations while on horseback. The person with the best hand of poker won \$1,000.

This year Circle F is in need of a title sponsor to make the Poker Ride an annual event. A person or company who makes a \$1,000 donation will receive a tax receipt and will also hold the title of the event and have the opportunity to fully incorporate their company in the Poker Ride.

"There's a lot of horses out there that need help," added Smith.

If you would like to make a donation to the Circle F Horse Rescue Society or can help to make the Poker Ride a reality this fall, contact Walter Paetkau at [paetkau@telus.net](mailto:paetkau@telus.net).